IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (New): A device for blocking a fuel assembly in a housing of a transport basket, the assembly comprising an upper end piece and the housing comprising a first open end and a second end, the device comprising:

means for making a rigid connection between the upper end piece of the fuel assembly and the open end of the housing, in a predetermined relative position such that the assembly bears in contact with at least one face of the housing on at least part of its length, the means for making a rigid connection being placed above the upper end piece of the assembly.

Claim 22 (New): A device according to claim 21, in which the fuel assembly and the housing have polygonal sections and the predetermined relative position is such that the upper end piece is bearing in contact with the two adjacent faces of the housing.

Claim 23 (New): A device according to claim 22, in which the fuel assembly and the housing have square sections.

Claim 24 (New): A device according to claim 21, further comprising a part of the housing with a smaller section, located close to the second end of the housing, the part with a smaller section having dimensions approximately equal to dimensions of the lower end piece of the fuel assembly.

Claim 25 (New): A device according to claim 21, in which the predetermined relative position is such that the fuel assembly is suspended by the upper end piece.

Claim 26 (New): A device according to claim 21, in which the means for making a rigid connection comprises a connecting device configured to be fixed on the upper end piece of the assembly by first clamping means and that can be fixed in the open end of the housing by second clamping means.

Claim 27 (New): A device according to claim 26, in which the connecting device includes means for transverse displacement configured to move the upper end piece of the assembly towards the two adjacent faces of the housing and away from them.

Claim 28 (New): A device according to claim 27, in which the connecting device includes means for axial displacement configured to move the assembly away from the second end of the housing and towards the second end.

Claim 29 (New): A device according to claim 28, in which the first clamping means, the second clamping means, the means for transverse displacement, and the means for axial displacement are activated by separate control devices configured to be maneuvered separately.

Claim 30 (New): A device according to claim 29, in which the connecting device has a longitudinal axis configured to be oriented parallel to the longitudinal axis of the fuel assembly, and the first clamping means comprises jaws configured to move onto a first part of the connecting device along directions approximately radial with respect to the axis, the

second clamping means comprises a bayonet ring configured to rotate about a second part of the connecting device about the axis, the means for axial displacement comprises means for controlling a relative displacement between the first part and the second part along the axis and the means for transverse displacement comprises at least one sliding block configured to move onto the first part of the connecting device along a direction approximately radial with respect to the axis, the sliding block also forming part of the second clamping means.

Claim 31 (New): A device according to claim 28, in which the first clamping means, the second clamping means, and the means for axial displacement are activated by a single control device and the means for transverse displacement is activated by another control device configured to be maneuvered separately from the single control device.

Claim 32 (New): A device according to claim 31, in which the single control device is a screw, anchored free to rotate on the connecting device, the screw acting on thrust rods forming the first clamping means and the means for axial displacement, and acting on jaws forming the second clamping means, through control rods articulated on the connecting device, on a nut engaged on the screw, on the thrust rods and the jaws, and the means for transverse displacement comprises thrust pads anchored on the connecting device.

Claim 33 (New): A device according to claim 28, in which the first clamping means, the means for transverse displacement, and the means for axial displacement are activated by a single control device and the second clamping means comprises a separate attachment device.

Claim 34 (New): A device according to claim 23, in which the single control device is a screw, anchored free to rotate on the connecting device, the screw acting on claws forming the first clamping means, the means for axial displacement, and the means for transverse displacement, through a nut engaged on the screw and on which the claws are articulated.

Claim 35 (New): A method for blocking a fuel assembly in a housing of a transport basket, the assembly comprising an upper end piece and the housing comprising a first open end and a second end, the method comprising:

making a rigid connection between the upper end piece of the fuel assembly and the open end of the housing above the upper end piece of the assembly, in a predetermined relative position such that the fuel assembly is not in contact with the bottom of the housing and is either bearing in contact with at least one face of the housing or is bearing in contact with at least a part of the length of at least one face of the housing.

Claim 36 (New): A method according to claim 35, in which a lower end piece of the fuel assembly is placed in a part of the housing with a smaller section, located close to the second end of the housing, so as to hold the lower end piece transversally in the housing.

Claim 37 (New): A method according to claim 35, in which the fuel assembly and the housing have polygonal sections and the rigid connection is made in a predetermined relative position such that the upper end piece bears in contact with two adjacent faces of the housing.

Claim 38 (New): A method according to claim 37, in which a connecting device is fixed on the upper end piece of the fuel assembly placed outside the housing, the fuel

assembly is then inserted equipped with the connecting device in the housing oriented approximately vertically, the upper end piece is applied in contact with the two adjacent faces of the housing, and then the connecting device is fixed in the open end of the housing.

Claim 39 (New): A method according to claim 37, in which a connecting device is inserted above the upper end piece of the fuel assembly, the fuel assembly being placed in the housing oriented approximately vertically, the assembly is lifted while fixing the connecting device in the open end of the housing, and then the upper end piece is applied in contact with the two adjacent faces of the housing.

Claim 40 (New): A method according to claim 37, in which a connecting device is inserted above the upper end piece of the fuel assembly, the fuel assembly being placed in the housing oriented approximately vertically, the connecting device is fixed in the open end of the housing, the upper end piece is bring into contact with the two adjacent faces of the housing, and then the assembly is lifted and squeezed in contact with the connecting device in contact with the two adjacent faces of the housing.